

CLAIMS

Therefore, having thus described the invention, at least the following is claimed:

- 1 1. A method for controlling the presentation of a hierarchical arrangement of
2 items in a window of a graphical user interface, at least one of the items having one or
3 more related sub-items, the method comprising the steps of:
 - 4 determining when a cursor is moved over one of the items; and
 - 5 if the one of the items has one or more related sub-items, displaying a first
 - 6 preview window comprising the one or more related sub-items.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the cursor is manipulated by a mouse.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 - 2 when the cursor is moved over one of the items and a button is clicked,
 - 3 expanding the hierarchical arrangement of items in the window to display the one or
 - 4 more related sub-items.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein each of the items comprises a text object and
2 a button and further comprising the step of:
 - 3 when the cursor is moved over the button associated with one of the items and
 - 4 the button is selected, expanding the hierarchical arrangement of items in the window
 - 5 to display the one or more related sub-items.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2 determining when the cursor is moved over one of the related sub-items in the
3 first preview window; and
4 if the one of the related sub-items has one or more related second-level sub-
5 items, displaying a second preview window comprising the one or more related
6 second-level sub-items.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein at least a portion of the second preview
2 window is displayed over at least a portion of the first preview window.

1 7. The method of claim 5, wherein one or more of the related sub-items has one
2 or more related second-level sub-items; and
3 further comprising the step of:
4 displaying a second preview window comprising the one or more
5 related sub-items.

1 8. A system for controlling the presentation of a hierarchical arrangement of
2 items in a window of a graphical user interface, at least one of the items having one or
3 more related sub-items, the system comprising:

4 logic configured to:

5 determine when a cursor is moved over one of the items; and

6 if the one of the items has one or more related sub-items, display a first
7 preview window comprising the one or more related sub-items;

8 a memory comprising an application supporting a graphical user interface and
9 in which the logic is stored;

10 a display device configured to support the graphical user interface;

11 a cursor manipulation device configured to cooperate with the application and
12 for manipulating the cursor with respect to the graphical user interface; and

13 a processing device configured to implement the logic and the application.

1 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the logic is embodied in an operating system
2 and initiated by the application.

1 10. The system of claim 8, wherein the cursor manipulation device is a mouse.

1 11. The system of claim 8, wherein each of the items comprises a text object and a
2 button.

1 12. The system of claim 8, wherein the logic is further configured to:
2 determine when the cursor is moved over one of the related sub-items in the
3 first preview window; and
4 if the one of the related sub-items has one or more related second-level sub-
5 items, display a second preview window comprising the one or more related second-
6 level sub-items.

1 13. The system of claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the second preview
2 window is displayed over at least a portion of the first preview window.

1 14. The system of claim 12, wherein one or more of the related sub-items has one
2 or more related second-level sub-items and the logic is further configured to display a
3 second preview window comprising the one or more related sub-items.

1 15. A system for controlling the presentation of a hierarchical arrangement of
2 items in a window of a graphical user interface, at least one of the items having one or
3 more related sub-items, the system comprising:
4 means for determining when a cursor is moved over one of the items; and
5 a means for displaying a first preview window comprising the one or more
6 related sub-items if the one of the items has one or more related sub-items.

1 16. The system of claim 15, further comprising a cursor manipulation means for
2 manipulating the cursor with respect to the graphical user interface.

1 17. The system of claim 15, wherein each of the items comprises a text object and
2 a button.

1 18. The system of claim 15, wherein:
2 the means for determining determines when the cursor is moved over one of
3 the related sub-items in the first preview window; and
4 the means for displaying displays a second preview window comprising the
5 one or more related second-level sub-items if the one of the related sub-items has one
6 or more related second-level sub-items.

1 19. A computer program, which is embodied in a computer-readable medium, for
2 controlling the presentation of a hierarchical arrangement of items in a window of a
3 graphical user interface, at least one of the items having one or more related sub-
4 items, the computer program:
5 logic configured to:
6 determine when a cursor is moved over one of the items; and
7 if the one of the items has one or more related sub-items, display a first
8 preview window comprising the one or more related sub-items.

1 20. The computer program of claim 19, wherein the logic is further configured to:
2 determine when the cursor is moved over one of the related sub-items in the
3 first preview window; and
4 if the one of the related sub-items has one or more related second-level sub-
5 items, display a second preview window comprising the one or more related second-
6 level sub-items.